Etcetera and the Comic Reader

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ETCETERA & THE COMIC READER

Loads of news from NPP this month, folk so let's get into it:

C.C. Beck is the artist on Shazam!, DC's new title featuring Captain Marvel. The first issue (scheduled for release about Christmas, ad shown elsewhere in this issue) will contain an origin recap (with a fantastic framing device which proves that Denny O'Neil can write Capt Marvel in the original vein) and a story which explains where Billy Batson & Co. have been for 20 years. There is also a reprint, as in every issue of the title. The first story has come in, and take my word for it, it is the Big Red Cheese.

There will be a Wonder Woman hardcover this year, probably at Christmas-time. It is basically similar to last year's Superman and Batman books, but will have a different publisher and editor. Full details next issue, when the contracts have been signed. A Capt. Marvel hardcover is under consideration at the present time.

NPP is starting a search for new talent. Artists and writers who are just starting, or who want to start, will be offered "apprenticeships" in which they can be trained in needed skills while doing simple work. In the new offices they will even have a special working area. Fans who feel that their work has promise are directed to send samples of their art, or story synopsis packages to Sol Harrison. He will examine it and send you his comments, as well as let you know if he feels there is a place for you in the new "junior bullpen" at NPP.

Neal Adams has been taken off both GL/GA and El Diablo as a result of his continual lateness. He still has one Batman script and may continue to do work on that strip. He will be replaced on El Diablo by Alfredo Alcala (I believe that there is one more Adams story coming up first). With his departure from GL/GA, the series is being split into its two anscestor strips: Green Lantern, in "traditional" stories in the back of every issue of The Flash by Denny O'Neil and Dick Giordano (probably); and Green Arrow by Elliot Maggin and an as-yet-uncertain artist in every third issue of Action Comics. GA, by the by, finally gets a job in Action.

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Tarzan 215 will be a Hal Foster reprint issue. It is the last one contemplated for the immeadiate future.

The running of Green Arrow in alternation with the Human Target (by Len Wein & Dick Giordano) strip in Action is indicative of what Julie Schwartz is doing with his back features. Over in Detective Comics, four strips will rotate. Jason Bard (by Frank Robbins & Don Heck) will run in every other issue. In between three other strips will alternate, in this order: The Elongated Man, Atom, and Hawkman. Nelson Bridwell has written the next Elongated Man story, Murphy Anderson is busy illustrating the next Atom story.

Art changes on both strips in Weird Worlds take place with the fourth issue. John Carter of Mars will be done by Sal Amendola (whose pencil work has suddenly improved fantastically) and Dick Giordano. David Innes Of Pellucidar will be drawn by Mike Kaluta.

Denny O'Neil is writing a new Fafhrd & Mouser story for the third issue of Sword of Sorcery.

Anyone who isn't blind will have seen Berni Wrightson's rendition of the Shadow on this issue's cover. How's that for a quick sneak peek.

NPP has about six new projects in the works for early '73 and I'll be telling you about at least two of them next issue.

Original material in each issue of NPP books will be cut back 1 page to make room for the return of the Direct Currents page, in a revised format.

You might ask your wholesaler if he got a "Shazam Is Coming" button. They'll be distributed in a promotional campain soon, but won't be available to fans or dealers so your only chance to get one is to mug your wholesaler.

Laurel & Hardy remains tied up in the legal department. No predictions. If it stays in legal hassles for a while then sales figures will be in and DC will know if it pays to keep it going.

Man-Bat is back in the current Detective Comics.

Steve Sherman has been promoted to associate editor on the Kirby line.

I neglected to mention that Jack Oleck's paperback adaptation of NPP mystery stories will use stories from The Unexpected as well as House Of Mystery.

The new format Adventure Comics will feature no continuing characters, just straight adventure stories.

There's a mass evacuation of NPP folks to Europe this summer, led by Joe Kubert and Bob Kanigher. Also going (or gone) are Leo Dorfman and Bob Brown. Enjoy, folks.

The line-up for Wanted 6 is set: Starman's second battle with the Mist, Sargon versus The Blue Lama, and Joe Kubert's version of Wildcat fighting The Golden Wasp.

Kamandi 2 takes him to the New York Subway system, 3 &4 to the remains of Los Vegas where he meets tiger-people and gorilla people.

Phantom Stranger 23 begins a new back-feature...The Spawn Of Frankenstein. The new series will feature Dr. 13 in a supporting role. Art will be by Mike Kaluta.

Weird Worlds No. 3 (c) 1972 ERB, Inc.

Coming Comics

FOR NEW READERS: COMING COMICS is a directory of the upcoming month's releases from major comic art publishers. The listings follow this format:
TITLE (Number, cover date). Description of contents. (On sale date)

£ £ £

OUR ARMY AT WAR (251, November). Sgt. Rock and Easy Co. face a famous foe from the past -- The Iron Major. Script by Bob Kanigher, art by Russ Heath. (9/5)

FALLING IN LOVE (138, December). (9/5)

GHOSTS (9, November). "Curse Of The Phantom Puppet" by John Calnan, "Last Ride Of Rosie The Wrecker" by Nestor Redondo, "Spectral Shepard Of Dartmoor" by Jerry Grandinetti, and "The Phantom That Never Was". Cover by Cardy. (9/5)

PHANTOM STRANGER (22, December). Contuing the current multi-part saga we have "The Circle Of Evil" by Len Wein and Jim Aparo. Doctor Terry Thirteen faces a "Creature Of The Night" by Tony DeZuñiga. (9/5)

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD (104, December). BATMAN and DEADMAN together in "Second Chance For A Deadman", script by Bob Haney, art by Jim Aparo. The storyline pretty much ignores the Kirby plots on Deadman. (9/7)

WONDER WOMAN (203, December). Denny O'Neil's farewell issue of WW involves her with women's lib, a department store boss who is ripping off the folks in the neighborhood, and any number of other things. Script by Chip Delany, interior art & cover by Dick Giordano. (9/7)

TEEN TITANS (42, December). "Slaves Of The Emperor Bug", by Bob Haney, Artie Saaf and Nick Cardy. Next issue is the last. (9/7)

WEIRD WAR TALES (8, November). Now monthly, now edited by Joe Orlando. "Avenging Grave", "Thou Shalth Not Kill" and "Duel Of The Dead". (9/7)

£ £ £

YOUNG ROMANCE (188, November). (9/12)

WITCHING HOUR (25, November). "A Grave Undertaking" by Jim Aparo, "Death's Dread Dirge" by Tony DeZuñiga, "Heads And Tales" by Jerry Grandinetti, and "Happy Birthday, Sweet Sixteen" by a talented former fan named Bill Payne. Cover by Cardy. (9/12)

KORAK, SON OF TARZAN (49, December). The origin of the son of Tarzan is explored in "The Lizard Men". The story is a bit changed, though. For instance, he doesn't find Miriam, ever. Script by Bob Kanigher (I believe), art by Frank Thorne. Carson Of Venus in "Gathering Tarel", a not-so harmless avocation. Script by Len Wein, art by Mike Kaluta. Now under the editorial hand of Joe Kubert.(9/12)

SUPERMAN (258, November). The Galactic Golem returns in "Fury Of The Energy Eater" by Len Wein, Curt Swan and Murphy Anderson. Plus a Private Life Of Clark Kent story-- "Who Is Mister X?" in which Clark tries to discover the identity of his next door neighbor without using his powers. By Cary Bates, Curt Swan and Dick Giordano.(9/14)

MISTER MIRACLE (11, December). "The Greatest Show Off Earth" begins the road show career of Miracle crew. Ted Brown becomes their manager. The villain is an old fiend this issue... Doctor Bedlam. (9/14)

FORBIDDEN TALES OF DARK MANSION (8, December). "Twilight Of The Cat", "Just Imagine" and "Blank Space".(9/14)

WANTED -- THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS VILLAINS (3, November). Now monthly. Editor Bridwell takes a Golden Age turn with a triple helping of 40s classics: Joe Kubert's Hawkman in "The Human Fly Gang", a very early 6 page Sherman Doctor Fate, and Mort Meskin's Vigilante fighting "The Dummy". Cover by Nick Cardy. (9/14)

£ £ £

OUR FIGHTING FORCES (140, December). The Losers are captured by the Nazis until a certain un-named one eyed, one legged pirate shows up. Guess who? (9/19)

SUPERGIRL (1, November). Supergirl finally gets her own title. 8 times a year, edited by Bob Kanigher. Some of this issue's material was edited by Woolfolk, however. Supergirl in "Trial Of The Madmen" by Cary Bates, Art Saaf and Vince Colletta. Plus

Zatanna in "Castle In The Clouds" by Len Wein & Marv Wolfman with art by John Rosenberger and Dick Giordano. Cover printed last ish. (9/19)

JIMMY OLSEN (154, November). Here's where I get the Pulitzer for bad journalism. In all my digging up till now I forgot to find out that the new artist on Olsen is one Kurt Schaffenberger (inks by Colletta) and the writer is Leo Dorfman. Stories in this ish: "Olsen The Red" and "The Girl Who Was Made Of Money". (9/19)

THE DEMON (3, November). Now monthly. Enter "The Reincarnationist", a man who turn people into their previous incarnations. (9/21)

YOUNG LOVE (101, November). (9/21)

HOUSE OF SECRETS (102, November). Sorry, no info. (9/21)

STRANGE ADVENTURES (239, December). The cover story (Cardy cover) is "The Amazing Trial Of John (Gorilla) Doe" by John Broome, Carmine Infantino & Joe Giella. Plus Adam Strange in "The Metal Conqueror Of Rann" from Mystery In Space 79. (9/21)

£ £ £

HOUSE OF MYSTERY (208, November). Two stories this month: "Creator Of Evil" and "The Day The Clocks Stopped". (9/26)

LOVE STORIES (147, November). Formerly Heart Throbs. (9/26)

THE UNEXPECTED (141, November). "Just What Did Eric See", "A Change For The Hearse", "The Coffin Came On Time", "A Madman's Loose Among Us". The last one has Lee Elias art. (9/26)

ACTION COMICS (418, November). Murray Boltinoff's 26th and last issue. Next ish will be edited by Julie Schwartz and will feature The Human Target as the back feature. For the meantime, Superman faces "The Attack Of The Phantom Super-Foes" and Metamorpho meets a "Phantom Of Death". (9/28)

WEIRD MYSTERY TALES (3, December). Next issue this becomes a standard Orlando mystery book. Meanwhile it has a Cardy cover and...Kirby did "The Burners" for Spirit World but here is where it gets printed. Plus "I Know Your Future" by Purcell and a reprint "The Wizard's Gift" (9/28)

DETECTIVE COMICS (429, November). Batman in "Man Bat Over Vegas", an all-Robbins job. Plus Jason Bard in "Case Of The Loaded Case" by Frank Robbins, Don Heck & Joe Giella. (9/28)

TARZAN OF THE APES (214, November). Joe Kubert continues the adaptations from Jungle Tales Of Tarzan with "Nightmare", the story of Tarzan's theft of meat from the african village and his dreams resulting from the food's impurities. Plus the second chapter of Beyond The Farthest Star by Marv Wolfman and Dan Green. (9/28)

+ + +

Mad Magazine 156

National Lampoon 30

Eerie 44

Nightmare 10 (9/28)

Monster Times 16+

Monster Times 17+

+dates unknown because of switch of distributers

COVER GALLERY

Demon 3 (c) 1972 NPP, Inc.

NEWS

The last Beast story will be in Amazing Adventures 16. War Of The Worlds is scheduled to start in the following issue but no one is making any definate promises.

X-Men fans really shouldn't dispair, though. Their own magazine is going to go to new material at the first practical issue (in other words, when deadlines are favorable). It's a nice thing to wait for.

Speaking of going to new material...the long delayed switch-over of material in Ringo Kid is now slated for the issue out in December.

The new art team on The Avengers...Don Heck and Dave Cockrum. Heck, in case you have a short memory, did about 30 issues in the sixties.

Gullivar Of Mars will last appear in Creatures On The Loose 21. Tentatively scheduled to replace him is Lin Carter's barbarian hero Thongor.

Frankenstein is the name of a new Marvel book. It will be written by Gary Friedrich and drawn by Mike Ploog. It should be out fairly soon.

Steve Englehart is taking over writing The Hulk.

Four years ago, George Tuska did a story for Capt America 114. Stan Lee decided to change the direction of the book and the work went into a draw. It will surface (or at least 7 pages of it) in Avengers 106, on this month's Coming Comics page.

Ernie Chua inked Doc Savage 2 and may remain on the book, no firm decision yet.

The next few issues of Astonishing Tales will feature "Ka-Zar In The Concrete Jungle". Art by Gil Kane.

Hero For Hire goes monthly with the fourth issue on the basis of the mail response, no sales figures having arrived yet.

Steranko and Adams are doing a number of covers for Marvel books.

The new artist on Shanna is Ross Andru. He will begin with the second issue.

Steve Englehart will be writing Hero For Hire.

Steve Gerber, a new bullpen staffer, will be writing Man-Thing and some other strips.

Gothic Thrillers has been changed to Supernatural Thrillers.

Marvel has some sort of extra-large edition of a book coming out in December which will feature the origins of many of their characters. Probable cost is a buck. Details next month, I hope.

For Monsters Only is being reissued as Monster Madness.

Roy Thomas took off for a two week vacation (well-earned) and left Steve Englehart behind as editor, so there will be a few gaps in Steve's writing jobs. Steve Gerber is filling in on an issue or two of Capt America, for instance.

There's a load of new titles coming up, and a number of new ideas and a lot of them'll be run down in the next issue.

Ron Goulart, the science fiction writer, is doing a number of stories for Marvel.

An explination: The following Coming Comics listing runs from 8/29 to 9/19. Why? Because I work off the production schedules at each company, and Marvel's August production schedule features those books. No matter what, you'll always be kept notified of books about one month ahead. Okay, on to the list..

INCREDIBLE HULK (158, December). The Hulk and The Rhino take a trip to the world of Counter-Earth where they fight Bruce Banner (remember--no super types on CE) and some of the Man Beasts. Plot by Roy Thomas, script by Steve Gerber, art by Trimpe & Trapani. (8/29)

DAREDEVIL (94, December). It's the end of The Indestructable Man this issue. Script by Gerry Conway, art by Colan & Palmer. (8/29)

IRON MAN (53, December). The fight with and origins of Raga and the Black Lama, his mentor. The battle takes place in a mystic dimension. Script by Mike Friedrich, art by George Tuska & Vince Colletta with some additional pages by Jim Starlin. (8/29)

KID COLT OUTLAW (165, December). (8/29)

MILLIE THE MODEL (199, December). (8/29)

CHILI (20, December). (8/29)

MONSTERS ON THE PROWL (20, December). (8/29)

WYATT EARP (31, December). (8/29)

SUPERNATURAL THRILLERS (1, December). A book-length adaptation of Theodore Sturgeon's story "It", which inspired the Man-Thing, Heap, Hulk, et al. Cover by Steranko. Script by Roy Thomas, art by Marie Severin and Frank Giacoia. (8/29)

SHANNA THE SHE-DEVIL (1, December). The origin and first adventure of an ecology minded girl who fights to save the jungle. Script by Carol Seuling and Steve Gerber. Art by George Tuska & Vince Colletta. Cover by Steranko. (8/29)

£ £ £

THOR (206, December). Thor fights the Absorbing Man while Loki takes over the mind of one Tom Fagan in the lead-in to next issue's Rutland-Halloween adventure. Script by Gerry Conway, art by John Buscema. (9/5)

SUB-MARINER (56, December). A fill-in issue to relieve Everrett's schedule. Subby returns to Atlantis to save it from a new menace. Mike Friedrich on script, Dan Adkins on art. (9/5)

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN (115, December). The wind up of the Hammerhead/Doc Ock/Gang war story and a resolution of Aunt May's problems with a nice surprise ending. Script by Gerry Conway, art by John Romita. (9/5)

AVENGERS (106, December). More plots in this one than in a year's worth of a normal comic. Cap is busy remembering a fight that never happened, The Vision is busy being withdrawn, a mystery foe traps the other Avengers, and more. It begins a 2 and a half part story. Script by Steve Englehart, art by Buckler, Tuska, & Cockrum (inks). (9/5)

MARVEL TRIPLE ACTION (8, December). The Avengers in "Even Avengers Can Die" script by Kirby, art by Heck. From No. 14. (9/5)

CAPT AMERICA (156, December). Cap & Co. fight it out with the fakes at the base of the Torch of Friendship monument in Miami. Plus a statement of Cap's philosophy. Steve Englehart, Sal Buscema & Frank McLaughlin. (9/5)

THE OUTLAW KID (13, December). The last Rebel and his band terrorize Caliper City and discover the kid's identity. Gary Friedrich, Dick Ayers and Jack Abel. (9/5)

DOC SAVAGE (2, December). Conclusion of the adaptation of "The Man Of Bronze" as the crew fights the Son Of The Feathered Serpent in a Mayan land. Story by Englehart, art by Andru & Chua, cover by Steranko. (9/5)

£ £ £

HARVEY (6, December). (9/12)

RAWHIDE KID (106, December). (9/12)

CONAN THE BARBARIAN (21, December). The war saga continues with "Monsters And The Monolith", drawn in part from Howard's "The Black Stone", a non-Conan story. Roy Thomas, Barry Smith, and Dan Adkins. (9/12)

MARVEL TALES (40, December). Spidey in "Doc Ock Wins" from No. 55. Lee & Romita. (9/12)

ASTONISHING TALES (15, December). Ka-Zar in the concrete jungle is this series within a series by Mike Friedrich, Gil Kane, and Tom Sutton. (9/12)

THE X-MEN (79, December). "We Must Destroy The Cobalt Man" from No. 31 by Thomas & Roth. (9/12)

COMBAT KELLY (4, December). The conclusion of the three part story. Gary Friedrich & Dick Ayers. (9/12)

HERO FOR HIRE (4, December). Now monthly. "The Phantom Of 42 St", a story about a ghost who is haunting the theatre where Luke Cage has his hq. Archie Goodwin, Billy Graham and Syd Shores. (9/12)

GUNHAWKS (2, December). "Jailbreak" by the usual crew. (9/12)

FEAR (11, December). MAN-THING in another adventure. Adams cover, Steve Gerber and Rich Buckler interior work. (9/12)

£ £ £

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY (2, December). "Yours Truly, Jack The Ripper", a Robert Bloch story adapted by Ron Goulart, Gil Kane & Ralph Reese. A vampire story by George Effinger and Billy Graham and a reprint round out the book. Kane/Palmer cover. (9/19)

WARLOCK (3, December). Adam fights a god-like being called Apollo, the new leader of the new men. Script by Mike Friedrich, art by Gil Kane & Tom Sutton. (9/19)

THE DEFENDERS (3, December). The heroes go into the dimension of the Nameless One with the Surfer, figuring that he can bypass Galactus' barrier in that dimension. Steve Englehart, Sal Buscema and Jim Mooney. (9/19)

OUR LOVE STORY (20, December). (9/19)

FANTASTIC FOUR (129, December). The return of the Frightful Four. The new fourth is Thundra, a villainess who'll appear in quite a few of the next batch of FF tales. Plus The Torch quits to go look for Crystal. Roy Thomas, John Buscema, Joe Sinnott. (9/19)

JUNGLE ACTION (2, December). Lorna, Tharn, & Co. Cover of Tharn by Gil Kane.

LI'L KIDS (9, December). (9/19)

MARVEL SPOTLIGHT (7, December). More on "Satan's Servents" as Crash tries to sacrifice Roxanne to get eternal life from Satan. Gary Friedrich, Mike Ploog and Frank Monte. (9/19)

SGT. FURY (105, December). "My Brother, My Enemy" from No. 36 by Thomas & Ayers.

FANZINE REVIEWS

LIAM O'CONNOR

FANDOM ANNUAL 3: It is a quaint 200 page book. It is worth well over the $4 price tag. Take G.B. Love's Collage issues...cut out the Keyhole and profan columns...mix well with extra material... bingo. The feature articles are timeless, of course.

We start the show with a very informative article on EC running 10 pages. Then a checklist of Vault of Horror, and EC cover reprints. Next comes "Underground" by James Van Hise, a good over view of the field. Then "Comic Book Fans" by Vincent Davis, a priceless three page strip which captures all the stupid things we do (a poster size blow-up hangs on Paul Levitz's wall and I never tire of it). A reprint of a feature showing Alex Raymond at work. The serial age is represented by 18 or 19 pages of stills. The Williamson Collector is collected into one section (it reprints, rates, & comments on Al's work) as is the similar series on Days Of Valor, the EC book. A Lone Ranger study in depth. A Hal Foster interview.

And then there's the strip reprints... Three or four Frazetta White Indian stories, a Joe Kubert Tor, a Basil Wolverton, a couple of Frazetta/Williamson stories, and a Lou Fine Ray. And a batch of comic cover reprints.

In summary I would like to say that if you don't buy the book now, you are losing more than money...reading pleasure.

FANDOM ANNUAL is $4 from G.B. Love, 9875 SW 212 Street, Miami, Florida 33157.

THE KLINE PORTFOLIO: Say the name "Kline" and you can start a debate. Not about the quality of his work, but about whether he draws fantasy, sf, or heroic fiction best. Gary Groth has collected his old work, added some new pages, and come up with a portfolio. The art is fantastic, therefore the book is. There are even double page fold outs.

KLINE PORTFOLIO is $2.50 from Gary Groth, Fantagraphics, 7263 Evanston Road, Springfield, Va. 22150. Full color cover, 44 pages.

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ALSO I HAD AN ADVERTISEMENT IN "THE BUYERS GUIDE" #16 JUNE ON PAGE #36 RESPONSE WAS VERY POOR SO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE THAT ISSUE ALL THE MARVEL COMICS THAT I LISTED ON THE LEFT PAGE FOR 25¢ EACH ARE NOW REDUCED TO 10 for $2.00 plus $.35 Postage or 30 for $5.25 POST-PAID! THE "SUPER MINTS" ON THE RIGHT HALF OF THE PAGE ARE THE SAME PRICE BECAUSE THEIR ALREADY LOW! PLEASE BUY EM HUH! MY SERVICE IS AS ALWAYS, ALL ORDERS MAILED OUT WITHIN 24 HOURS. ALTERNATES ARE APPRECIATED!

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TRY 'EM--YOU'LL LIKE 'EM!

It's come to my editorial notice recently that I've got a lot of readers who aren't too deep into fandom. For your benefit I'm running the following short list of fanzines that you might find interesting and/or worthwhile. Zine eds will please not get slighted if they're not on the list, cause space is short and I'll only list zines that are (in my opinion) both first rate, and devoted to text or ads principally, as art zines are geared to the tastes of the more sophisticated or experienced fans. Here we go...

THE MENOMONEE FALLS GAZETTE: A newspaper which takes the week's episodes of the finest adventure strips and puts them under one roof. Really beautiful, and it needs support. Sample 35¢, 12 week sub $4.50. Write:MFG, N85 W16505 Mary Ct, Menomonee Falls, Wis 53051.

FANTASTIC FANZINE: Best of the older article fanzines. Current issue is a $2 special covering last year's NY Con, Joe Sinnot interview, and much more. To order: DynaPubs, RR1 Box 297, East Moline, Il 61244.

THE CREATIVE ADVENTURE: A really nice new article mag. Current issue (No.2) contains Giordano interview, articles by Steve Englehart and Tom Greeniones, and more. $1 from; Dave Kasakove, 83 Irma Av, Port Washington, NY 11050.

ROCKET'S BLAST-COMICOLLECTOR: This mag always frustrates me. It's the only surving fanzine older than The Comic Reader. Damn! On the other hand, it contains a couple of nice columns and tons of ads. A sample copy is 75¢ from: SFCA, 9875 SW 212 St, Miami, Fa 33157.

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CURRENT SCHOOLS OF COMIC ART - PART 3

The stylistic conceptions of Berni Wrightson, Mike Kaluta, Bruce Jones, Steve Hickman, Alan Weiss, Jeff Jones, Wayne Howard, and Ralph Reese are by now familar to everyone. To me this group is the most significant school of comic art today besides being the largest. But for all their strength as a school, their work still leaves me with the impression of falling short of creating solid graphic stories. Somehow their technique seems dated and inadequate to the sense of immeadiate experience we desire today. Why?

To understand better, we must figure out a chunk of comics history. To future historians it will probably seem that the most important measures that advanced comics to a mature art form began in the 1960's. The decade was in large characterized by the storm of media that hit a high water mark late in the decade. It had much effect on the contemporary generation of youngsters. As much as it broke down fixed behaviour and traditional criterion of quality, it gave them a new freedom of thought and a greater openess to all forms of expression. It allowed that generation to be more responsive to comics than any previous one. We sensed unrealised power, and perhaps even some dignity in them.

By and large, I believe it was more the atmosphere of the 1960's rather than the actual quality of comics that made us into fans. In retrospect, almost all those issues that sparked our enthusiasm for comics as an artform seem to be little cause for excitement. The art is flat and the narrative technique, for the most part, crude. By everyone but fans, comics were considered hopeless, and lumped along with TV soap operas, women's magazines, and baseball cards in the box marked 'junk culture'. Our fannish feeling was at a great disadvantage to explain itself to parents and other critics.

To gain acceptance, we instinctually retreated into comics' past looking for a wholly respectable tradition in its family tree. Book illustration, the last member before cartooning, is the last link before people will question your tastes. Having found a link with "Art", we checked back into comics to find artists closely allied to that tradition. Thus interest was revived in a small, obscure group of whom only one had been consistently active in comics since his original glory 15 years before: Frazetta, Williamson, Krenkel, and Wood. Obscure in that, by volume of work, they are far outdistanced by Kurtzman, Eisner, and Krigstein who would have been ideal influences. But more so that any other comic artists, they represented to the fans a firm link to respectable art on which to found their energy. In fact, this choice is a bit more extreme than necessary. These artists, I believe, were selected because stylisticly alot of their idiom is derived from oil painting. This would explain why such fine draughtsmen as Lou Fine, Reed Crandall, George Evans, John Severin, and Bernie Krigstein were practicly ignored. Their idiom is almost wholly derived from pen and ink illustration; a much less respectable tradition critically.

Wrightson's importance is less as an originator and more as a transmitter of tradition and as the person who made the style accessible to other artists. Frazetta and Williamson were already well known in Creepy, but no one had attempted their refined technique before. The element of mature and intelligent draughting that Wrightson appropriated appealed to fans looking for a representation of comics as an adult medium.

Actually though, the tradition here goes back another generation before Frazetta to Hal Foster. The current school is in direct line of descent. Foster has my highest regards for some very important elements of graphic strory craftsmanship, but not for others. A study of Foster is the best practice any amateur can get for gaining control of effective figure drawing and genuine backrounds. His pen and ink technique is structurally sound as is no other's. However, becoming a competant graphic story artists involves more than mastery of drawing.

Let's examine PRINCE VALIANT to see if we can find what influence it is that hinders the current school of art from becoming whole graphic story artists. Prince Valient besides its real worth as fine craft and imaginative fantasy, was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15...

Fandom Forum: The Angry Young Fan

MARTIN PASKO

...AND IF IT COMES UP TO YOU AND SAYS, "SAY! AREN'T YOU THE GUY WHO WRITES ALL THOSE INCORRIGIBLE LETTERS?", STEP ON ITS FOOT...

The first time I was introduced to Neal Adams, he quipped, "So you're the guy who writes all those incorrigible letters!" At the time I was, of course, flattered by the recognition. I was either too naive or too stupid to know better.

Today, some seventy letters and four years later, I am at a loss to explain what it was that initially led me to write all those letters. Ultimately, I suppose, I wanted to share with my fellow readers on those pages a level of criticism somewhat different than the "Gosh-wow-did-I-dig-issue-37" variety which, for the most part, was the staple of the "lettercols". If that was indeed my goal, I failed.

If anyone who has ever read one of my letters thought they were vituperative (and they probably did; hardly any of my positive comments saw print), they should have seen the portions that were deleted. What I'm getting at is that I suspect we "lettercol regulars" lost the bulk of our more intelligent criticism to editorial blue-pencilling. I know that in my case any critical criteria I may have tried to utilize consistently - any credence I may have thus tried to lend my criticism - was greatly overshadowed by the reputation, ambitiously advanced by lettercol editors, of being chronically negative. Issue after issue, the set-up was perfect: four letters to a page: three raving, one panning outrageously. Guess whose letter was the token downer in that lettercol?! Which is all very strange, because the real criticism never saw print.

I would venture to guess, too, that the many others who made their names as regular contributors to the lettercols and who never went on to make names anywhere else-people like Paul Seydor, Dave Truesdale, Joe Rusnak, Dave Lewin, Joe Arul and such-are similarly confused about what got them so fantastically obsessed with letter writing. For some, it was a natural outgrowth of a need to write, I suppose. So people like Roy Thomas, Mike Friedrich, Mark Evanier and Don MacGregor went on to become writers in the comic industry; Paul Gambaccini wrote for a while for Rolling Stone; college professor Jerry Bails, who, at the time of his lettercol noteriety was already a founding father of comics fandom, went on to become an even bigger heavyweight in this fandom "business"; Guy Lillian is today plunging headlong toward a career writing science-fiction professionally; and people like Irene Vartanoff, Tony Isabella and myself are still breaking in, doing various things like plotting for Lois Lane, articles for The Monster Times, and horror stories for Warren, respectively. Many, like Akron's Mike Barr, still cling to the tenet, as I did, that if an editor becomes familiar enough with a certain name, and then begins to link that name with certain creative pieces crossing his desk, a private grooming process, much like the one Julius Schwartz conducted with Mike Friedrich, will take place. It takes a while for it to sink in, as it took four years with me, that that situation was a rarsity - a one shot deal.

Needless to say, the path that finds one glutting the letters pages is not necessarily the same as the road to writing comics professionally. So, then, what was it all for? For the ambition to become, eventually, another Mike Friedrich was the only other reason, beside a serious set of convictions and an earnest desire to share my opinion with other interested souls, that I wrote all those blasted letters. What has it gotten me that I couldn't have gotten without writing them?

First, let me stop here and clear up one basic misconception. I think all of us have endured for years the hostility of other comics readers who, in temper tantrums like that of Alvin Yellon (whose memorable letter attacking the "lettercol hogs" unfortunately found its way into print), have cursed their inability to see 1,000 of their words in print in a year (1,000 of their words missplelt, misquoted, and misdirected). I think it's safe to say that the reason for writing those letters wasn't merely to get them printed. Having them printed was a means to an end (that end being to share ideas) rather than an end itself. We weren't looking to "get anything" as our first motivation for taking pen in hand. But while I wasn't necessarily looking for

anything, I sure found a great deal. As I started to say, what letterwriting has done for me:

Anecdote 1. I am at a convention, wearing my name badge. (Mistake Number 1). Someone I've never seen before, passing me in a vestibule, turns around and shouts, several decibels louder than any conversation in the entire hall at the time, "Hey, PESKY!" There are two fleeting seconds in which the hubub grinds to absolute silence and I grin sheepishly at the mirthful stares in my direction, a moment for which I am forever grateful to my nameless well-wisher. I'll wring his neck...

Anecdote 2. I'm in an elevator; same convention. Three feet in front of me, a 12-year-old kid nudges his older brother, points his thumb in my direction, and whispers, "Look, it's Mrssphmm Prphrzptlk..." and the older boy looks down at the kid and says, in a voice with the clarity and precision of an orchestral downbeat, "Big f---ing deal."

Anecdote 3. The con the following year; the awards luncheon. A short blond kid whom, all convention long, panel moderators have been mistaking for a girl during question-and-answer time, is sitting to my right, screaming in my ear. I don't know why; perhaps he was deaf. And, if he had kept it up much longer, he would have had company. But it wasn't so much that as much as the fact that he was screaming something about did I think Denny O'Neil was hurting the continuity of Green Lantern by changing GL's characterization that bothered me. I turned to face him, he caught the name on the badge, and instantly (why should he be any different?), he shouted "Hey! You're the guy who writes all them letters, aren't you?" Which wasn't as bad as it could've been. It was just that he was spitting on my mashed potatoes...

And it's not just me; it happens to everyone. Irene Vartanoff is surrounded at conventions by her legion of little idiots asking absurd questions; Tony Isabella invites a legion of little idiots to ask absurd questions; and then there are people like Gary Skinner, Gerard Triano and Gregory Kent who are a legion of little idiots asking absurd questions.

And we have our little stacks of "pen pal" mail, most of it scrawled in crayon or pencil by mentally defective 30-year-olds; and our fair share of junk mail ("Increased Satisfaction with New Vibro-Massager!"), making us thank Stan Lee for all those wonderfully detailed letters pages he gave us; and fanzine editors who insist on referring to us in their publications as "lettercol regulars"...

In short, if you ever hope to write comics or comic-related material seriously, and want to gain a following of people who will read your stuff and appraise it seriously, don't get into writing LoCs. Marie Severin, in her quasi-articulate interview in a Sept., 1971 issue of Rolling Stone, expressed dissatisfaction with the "new breed" of fan who peers over the pro's shoulder and tells him what he's doing wrong. Yes, I know the fact that Marie's never heard of "criticism" isn't your problem, but I think it's really a safe bet that she speaks for the minds of most professionals who, either consciously or subconsciously, resent letterwriters who say anything more analytical than "Gosh-wow-I-really-dug-issue-37". I've found that all but a small handful of writers (I'll supply names on request) reject well-intentioned criticism. And, if you're lucky enough to find one of the two or three editors left who still think lettercolumns are useful for some purpose other than pushing the product by running as many glowing letters as can be found, and he runs consistently the letters of you ana a handful of others until all of you dodos get reputations, you'll still have to contend with the hoarde of crybabies complaining that you're ripping off free space, and all power to the people and all that garbage. Face it: you can't win.

If you've already become enmeshed in the onus surrounding "lettercol regulars", the mire of misspellings and misgivings, at least have the integrity not to bask in your ill-gotten fame. If, after already having been stupid enough to put your name on a con badge, you are approached by a seedy gremlin who steps on your feet and screams, "Aren't you the guy who writes all those incorrigible letters?", don't blush and look groundward; don't walk away angry; don't ignore him. Look him straight in the eye, step on his foot, spit in his mashed potatoes, and walk away...with dignity.

Then proceed, at your leisure, to write your funnybooks and wait for God to smile on you and turn you into a pro. But if you wake up one morning and hear God's awesome voice booming, "Say! Aren't you the guy who writes all those incorrigible letters?", you know you're in trouble.....

Anyone foolish enough to take any portion of the preceeding article seriously deserves to be a lettercol regular. MP

THE SWAMP THING 1. Stop and think a minute. If you wanted to put a top writer and artist on a mystery book, who would you pick? The answer, at least after reading this issue, is simple. Take two parts Len Wein, two parts Berni Wrightson, mix liberally with Joe Orlando and Gaspar Saladino and you come up with a potential Shazam and Comic Art Fan Award winner.

Wein and Wrightson. They do for The Swamp Thing what O'Neil and Adams did for Green Lantern. The book is absolute heaven to read. In fact, I found myself staring for several minutes at a time at each panel.

Berni's artwork is so fantastic that it is impossible to discribe. In my opinion he is the greatest artistic talent in comics today.

In my opinion, there are three really imaginative writers in comics today. They are (in no particular oder) Denny O'Neil, Len Wein and Steve Englehart. Well,one of them writes ST and that's all I ask.

Swamp Thing is a thing of beauty, with every panel a masterpiece. If the Shadow is up to the same standard, then the comic buying public is in for two bi-minothly treats./PK Kupperberg

THE FOREVER PEOPLE 11. Unfortunately, this is the last issue of The Forever People. As you know, it and New Gods were killed to make room for Demon and Kamandi.

Over the almost two years of the books existance, it has evolved into a pretty nice mag. The story line has been interesting (if overly complex at times) and the art has been very, well, very Kirby.

This issue ends with the five youths from New Genesis stranded on a sort of Negative Zone-ish world. They seem to accept their eternal exile and the final panel has them all walking off into the sunset in the eternal cliche.

The ending is good, for it gives the series a logical end yet allows for an eventual return of the characters, should it ever be desired.

We'll have to wait and see, 'ey guv'? /PK Kupperberg

ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION People, this is ye editor talking at you. I can only cater this magazine to your particular tastes if you tell me which portions of each issue you like, and which you dislike. I get perhaps four letters of comment each month, hardly a large enough portion of my 600 or 700 regular subscribers to make any decisions on the basis of. When you send in your sub renewal, tell me why you're renewing. Ask questions. Let me know if you want to see a specific DC cover proof. It is very hard to make do with the opinions of a small circle of friends.

t.c.r. 100 next year

Ad for SHAZAM! (c) 1972 NPP, Inc.

radar in the void CONT.

also created to satisfy a hypocritical lowbrow craving for fantasy adventure stories without having to trod through whole novels or read the reprehensible "funny pages". So Prince Valient was conceived to give the appearance of a scrapbook of illustrations torn from a Knights of the Round Table-esque novel. Book illustration at that time being gorgeous to say the least. This inital violence was well met by Foster. He was able to make a fine acheivement out of the situation. But he was essentially mixing 2 incompatible traditions. One, finely rendered illustration which is essentially visual in nature; and the other, funny page convention, which is essentially a story telling tradition even though pictures are used.

To use the comic rhetoric of people speaking in balloons would have been a blemish on the art but without them he was prevented from conveying a real sense of the story's immeadiacy and certainly from presenting action scenes of more than one picture successfully. He chose to use captioned text under the pictures thereby maintaining the breach between the two traditions.

The lesson to be learned is that Foster's strong and original stories were greatly compromised by being forced to straddle the fence. The stories would have had much greater immeadiate impact had they been presented either in straight text or as straight comic strips.

The current school has largely preserved Foster's dichotomy between pictures and text in spirit (as have Warren's spanish artists). The problem is that they have misconstrued the nature of graphic stories as: WORDS + PICTURES - whereas the idea is the two combined into a third new quality of visual storytelling. If an artists just renders a script: "He hits him on the jaw" "The sniper is huddled in the underbrush, waiting" he will be missing the whole dimension that comics handle best, that of conveying actual content visually; and ultimately artisticly.

The natural rejoinder to this article would be an explanation of how this can be done. But the pieces of that puzzle are scattered hither and yon, some have yet to be found. In future articles I hope to accumulate, if not coordinate, some of these pieces.--Tom Greeniones

When the Monster Times talks, everybody listens...

And that means that things can get pretty crowded at times. One way to avoid the crowds and beat the rush is to get your very own subscription to THE MONSTER TIMES which is, in case you haven't heard, the first multi-media newspaper, and a fun, informative tabloid devoted exclusively to a lighthearted but hardnosed, factual study of the best aspects (and, just for fun, some of the worse) of the 20th Century pop fantasy renaissance, namely films of the monster-horror variety, Sci-Fi, comics, pulps and all like that . . . items of rabid interest to anyone who digs the fantasy field. The format is, in a nutsheil, a Monster-sized tabloid featuring original color cover comics and anxiety-provoking centerfolds on sale every two weeks! Fans cannot afford to miss so much as a single issue. Not only will you miss out on the latest horrorific action, but there's a good chance we might even come looking for you!

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There will be a one-hour Monster Times radio show, one hour long, in the Los Angeles area. LA horror movie host Seymour will be the host.

Harlan Ellison has sold a tv series whose hero is a sorceror.

Gold Key will put out a reprint issue of UFO this summer.

Metro Con has been cancelled. Originally slated for August 26 & 27, this third year con was dropped by organizer Groth because of hotel problems.

Speaking of Gary, I might as well get some mileage out of a couple of news items he called me up at midnight one evening to discuss. He's publishing Fantastic Fanzine again, Alan Light couldn't keep up now that The Buyers' Guide is bi-weekly. A new pub from the Groth group is going to be on the order of Fantazine, Pasko & Brennert's old zine. Marty Pasko's back as the editor. It is scheduled for release in late August or September.

For those of you who missed it, Ruth Buzzi did a Clorox 2 commercial for tv where she played Mrs. Superman washing his costume.

Creation Con progresses slowly, one item worthy of note is that NY DJ Zacherly will try to show up to give the keynote speech. Comic buffs may know Zach from Lee At Carnegie Hall.

A fanzine by the name of Styx is on its way. Features include: Jeff Jones cover, Glenn Lord on the search for missing REHoward material, and a lot of nice stories and art. Advance copies are $2 from Joe Krolik, 490 Cordova St, Winnipeg, Man, R3N1A7, Canada.

Like the intelligent moron that I am, I gave Neal Pozner's apa and mag a big mention last issue and completely forgot to include his address. Ah well, it is rather typical. Anyhow: Neal Pozner, 4028 Anne Drive, Seaford, NY 11783.

The three Solomon Kane (Howard) paperbacks have apparently been reissued, at least I am seeing them in book stores long after they were declared out of print.

Mark Evanier last seen working for Walt Disney Studios, Gold Key, and The Monster Times. He reports that he is in constant communion with the dead, talks like Donald Duck, and is beginning to look like Frankenstein.

GOOD NEWS & BAD NEWS DEPARTMENT:
From the Maternity Ward, two new additions to the comic art world: Stephen Charles Thompson at 3:37 AM, August 1st, at 8 pounds, 1 ounce. Congrats to Don & Maggie; and Richard William Buckler on July 19th. The first name is from his artist-type dad and the middle from the similarly talented Bill DuBay. Congrats Mr & Mrs B. On the sober side of life, we might mention Phil Socci, a New York area fan who's in Long Island Jewish Medical Center, Lakeville Road, New Hyde Park, NY (Room 401) with an undiagnosed back problem. You might drop him a card and wish him well.

Phil Seuling passes along word that next year July Con will be 4 days, not 5, and may not fall exactly on the weekend of the 4th. Another little mini-progress-report is the fact that one of the guests of honor has been chosen, a certain artist by the name of C.C. Beck, who has just recently returned to the comic book field after a several year retirement, along with one of his more famous characters.

Newsday (the LI paper that reprints classic strips daily & Sunday) has also been running an original idea called "Graphic Opinion", strips with political ideas. Four strips alternate: Barry Smith's Love Is Strange, Herb Trimpe's The Eternal Soldier, and Steve Englehart's Phantom Of The Third World plus a strip by a non-comic book person. To see samples, pick up Shazam! The Wonderful World Of Comix, Neal Pozner's fan mag mentioned last issue. Also in the next ish: covers by Janson, Kirby/Sinnott, poster by Drucker, interviews: Infantino, Graham, Bubnis, all illoed by the respective artists. Lots more. over 50 pgs, $1. Order from Dave Kasakove (address on pg. 10).

And Mark Hanerfeld was last seen wearing his Tibeatian monk's robes, riding his sacred mule, and heading towards the Los Angeles SF Con (by riding over the water from Tibet).

Epoch is the name of a small zine put out by Steve Mattingly, 7826 Gatewood Lane, Indpls, Ind 46219. The next ish, No. 4, will contain art by Ditko, Sinnott, Newton, Fujitake, Paty, and others. Articles by Utley, Miller, Slifer, and others. Cost about 40¢.

Newcon, the New England Comicon will have Jack and Otto Binder, Roy Thomas, and Jim Steranko as special guests. The dates are Sept 2-4, and the cost is $3 for the three days. A full dealers' room, 12 hours of movies, chalk-talks, panels, auctions, and a full range of activities. If you can't make it to the LA World Science Fiction Con that weekend, do try and make this one.

The out-of-NY Cons have been ailing this summer. Most have suffered from under-attendance and under-sales in the dealers' rooms. Our road correspondant, Phil Seuling, reports only about 200 people at Norfolk Con.

By the by, Second Sunday will continue this year, although there is a chance that it will move to a different hotel in October. No definate plans yet.

The comic strip Wee Pals will be an ABC TV Series this fall.

King Features has produced a couple of educational comics featuring their characters. Single copies are available but I don't know the price. As a matter of fact, I can even find the address. Next issue, folk.

THE MONSTER TIMES

Comix stuff coming in The Times: 15. Vampires In The Comics by Jeffrey Wasserman, a review of the HPLovecraft fanzines by Gary Brown, and an sf book review. 16. Phase review, review of "History Of The Comic Strips". 17. Review of Heritage, my column. Not specifically scheduled: Wolverton article,"Werewolf Goes West" by Nick Cuti (script) and Frank Brunner. The subs are messed up again, bear with them. Issues will be out every 3 weeks this summer.

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ETC.

This issue is called, "Gee Paul, here's your chance to get back on schedule... put out an issue in one week. And that, dear ones, is exactly how long I spent on this gem.

I am too bushed to write much, except that I hope everyone enjoys the tons of covers that I'm shoving at them, and to beg you apathetic souls to write me telling me what you want to see in this mag. If 25 of you took the time to write and tell me that you wanted to see more Gold Key news, I would do it. But as is, I just have trouble getting up the spirit to do it.

Next month? Maybe some Wandering Fan nonsense, another installment of True Confessions, I don't know what else. At this point, I don't know what's in this issue. It'll be out about Sept. 10, though. Providing, of course, that my duties on the school program committee don't send me up a wall first.

APOLOGIA: The missing Wrightson art that I mentioned last issue was finally delivered by the post office. The final delivery time was some 2 weeks after it was mailed, via either first class or priority mail, I'm not sure which. Take it light folks, these things happen with the wonderful US Postal Service.

THE COVER: This is the first time that I've used any non-original material as a full cover, but I think Berni Wrightsons fantastic rendition of the Shadow just had to be done as close to full size as possible. It is worth noting that the aforementioned piece (a NPP house ad) is Berni's very first attempt to portray The Shadow. The best is yet to come. The ad is, of course, (c) copyright 1972 by National Periodicals, Inc.

Oh yeah, a mailbag item. My coming comics dates are not wrong, even if your local distributer doesn't agree with them. Mine are based on the production schedules at the companies, and each individual wholesaler takes it from there. Nothin' I can do about it.

It is now 10:30 at night, I'm tired, and this column is...finished.

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